Love Drunk

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Love Drunk

by EarthsickWithoutYou

Summary

Hannibal ruins Will's attempt to begin the perfect honeytrap scheme by being a cute drunk.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

It was seven-thirty p.m. on the dot. Will knocked on the office door, then posed exactly as he had planned. He'd never carried out a honeytrap scheme before, but it seemed easy enough, and scheming was a great way to keep his mind off the many disturbing and distracting problems which would otherwise overwhelm him.

Betrayal, friendship and love were complicated. Violence was a forbidden temptation. Vengeance, especially when carried out on the proper side of justice, was simple, clear, and safe.

Will turned around as if he was casually surveying the pretentious artwork on the waiting room wall. He reminded himself that he hated everything about this place, this respectable office covered in the trappings of Hannibal's disguise as a benevolent, helpful therapist. His *friend*, his paddle, the one person who understood him, who Will could trust--

He was going to hurt the person who had broken his heart and ruined his life, starting tonight. He was going to drag Hannibal right down to the deepest, darkest pit of Hell and leave him there all alone. Turnabout was fair play. This was fair, and *right.* And when it was all over, Will would get back to living and forget he ever knew a man named Hannibal Lecter. He was going to --

"Will?" A surprised voice blurted around what sounded weirdly like a smothered hiccup.

The profiler had purposely presented himself ass-first, to tease the doctor's obvious attraction to him, hopefully drive him a little crazy given the nice, expensive, and snug-fitting new trousers he wore. Will turned slowly, lifting his eyebrows with a debonair half-smile, more teasing to whet his former friend's appetite. He wondered what Hannibal would think of his new haircut and the neatly ironed salmon-colored shirt he'd picked out, but he decided he was only curious about that because everything in his appearance was a cleverly honed tool for revenge.

Will opened his mouth to say something devastatingly smart in a wry drawl.

Hannibal cut him off, half-leaned out of the doorframe. "Hello, beautiful," he said with an enormous, idiotic grin on his face.

He was slurring his words, Will realized. And his hair was messy, matted to his head in a light sheen of sweat that made his forehead glow. His tie was yanked loose, collar open, and his pupils were dilated. There was a slight smell of whiskey emanating from his whole person, his breath and the rumpled remnants of his fancy suit.

He called me beautiful, Will's heart pointed out uselessly, feeling strange, warm and tight in his chest. Annoyed with himself that this was his emotional takeaway from the outrageous situation, Will frowned.

"Dr. Lecter, have you been drinking?"

Hannibal smirked and pinched the air with two fingers. "Just a lil. Please, won'tchu comein?"

Will followed Hannibal into the office, where the doctor nearly stumbled into his chair, then gestured broadly for Will to take up his own. The two leather chairs were still positioned exactly as they used to be, a little closer than was traditionally the norm between therapist and patient. The physical proximity had helped establish a sense of intimacy between them, suitable for their unconventional conversations, and for Hannibal to twist Will's mind to his evil whims with sadistic glee.

"Sit with me," Hannibal suggested, and then he said a whole bunch of things in Lithuanian which Will couldn't begin to understand. He registered Will's perplexed expression. "Oh! Sorry, I forgot to speak English. Meant to ask do you want a drink?"

"Um, no. Are you expecting someone?" Will asked, supremely weirded out. He set his jacket down on the couch like the old days and took up his seat, immediately immersed by nostalgia, the exact kind he *didn't* want to feel. Fond memories of friendship, belonging, even a longing that had just begun to stir in earnest when Hannibal ruined it all.

"Only you, my darling boy." Hannibal smiled at him like Will hung the moon.

"You...kept my standing appointment open?" Will asked. His face felt hot.

"'Course I did." Hannibal lifted a tumbler and took a long sip of amber alcohol. "I been waiting here for you, so lonely. Devash- devashtated? Alone."

"That's kind of an odd way for you to feel, given that you're the reason I was institutionalized."

"I know!" Hannibal laughed, slapped his knees, and looked suddenly on the verge of tears. "I know," he sniffled pathetically. His face crumpled as Will looked at him in horror.

"Oh, Jesus, please don't cry in front of me," Will snapped. He stood up and took the glass out of Hannibal's hand. He had to wrench it from the older man's strong sweaty grip. Then he replaced it with a box of tissues. "What the fuck do you think this is? Do you think I'm so dumb I won't see right through this whole drunken, lovelorn routine for the new manipulation it almost certainly is?"

"Almost certainly is not certain." Hannibal said stubbornly. Despite his inebriated state, he dabbed at his cheeks and nose with the utmost manners, deposited the crumpled kleenex in the nearby garbage bin, then rubbed his hands with liquid sanitizer from the bottle on his desk. "Part of you still believes in me."

"You're wrong about that," Will claimed, as coldly as he could. *Shut up, stupid heart.*

"Don't think so." Hannibal sat on the edge of his desk, drumming his fingers. "Why then're you here?"

"I wanted to resume my therapy." Oh, thank God, they could get back to the conversation he had planned. "I need to deal with you, and my feelings about you. It seems best that I do that directly."

“Oh, sweetheart,” Hannibal sighed. “I knew you had feelings for me.”

“What?” Will grimaced, “No, not like that, you--”

“You look so gorgeous.” Hannibal lumbered towards him crookedly, then loomed over his chair on unsteady feet, again grinning at him, eyes shining with what looked for all the world like genuine admiration. “Beautiful, beautiful boy. New haircut and clothes. They suit you, my dear. And you smell divine. New aftershave at last?”

Will wasn’t quite sure what to do. He had not included any contingencies for this in his plan. “Um, yeah, I just wanted to...I mean, it’s not appropriate for you to...Hannibal, we’ve got to get you sobered up. I can’t deal with this.”

Hannibal knelt beside his chair, crossed his arms over the armrest and gazed up at Will with stars in his eyes. “I could eat you up.”

“Yes, that’s the problem, actually,” Will retorted, getting to his feet and beginning to pace. “Too much people eating, Hannibal. Eating people you’ve murdered. Innocent people. Framing me for it, remember?”

“Of course I remember, Will. I may be slightly tipsy but my brain is still intact. Wait, wha-did I just say?”

“I think you just confessed to your crimes,” Will pointed out. “More or less. Not sure it’d hold up in court though because you’re fucking wasted.”

Frustration pulsed at Will's temples. He was so beyond aggravated that his perfect plans had been thrown askew by this unexpected development, God! When was he going to catch a break and get the upper hand?

“Haha, you cannot use it then.” Hannibal’s gloating evaporated as quickly as it had formed. “Will, I’m trying to tell you how much I missed you.”

He seemed to be zigzagging between extremes of emotion. Will had only been *that* drunk a couple of times in his life, and it had been a horrible experience, that right on the edge of blackout, uncontrollable, nauseous rush of emotion and neediness.

He found the large, half-empty bottle of very pricey whiskey on Hannibal’s desk and lifted it, pretending to be interested in the label to try and keep his own feelings in check. Maybe if he stayed busy, kept his focus on the task at hand -- who knew what other valuable intel Hannibal might let slip while he was drunk? Maybe he could still play it cool…

“This is what you’ve been drinking?” he asked.

Hannibal had settled into Will’s abandoned chair. “Bought that bottle for you, before, when we were friends. Wanted to share it together, used to think about that all the time.” Hannibal shrugged. “I could never summon the nerve to take it out and show you. Perhaps it would have sounded too much like a date.”

“You couldn’t get up the nerve to give me a gift or ask me for a date, but you had no trouble *summoning* the wherewithal to lie to me about everything that mattered, including my own illness, and pin your disgusting crimes on me,” Will seethed.

“Angel of vengeance. My angry, sweet boy,” Hannibal sighed. His voice had devolved into a croak, and there were dark circles under his eyes. He was going to feel like absolute hell in the morning.

Will would not react to his words. They didn’t mean anything to him, they probably weren’t even true. Hannibal wasn’t cute when he was drunk, of course he wasn’t! Why would that idea even come into Will’s mind?

Fuck. Will stood with his hands on his hips, glowering, working so hard to try and hold onto his rage, which at the moment felt like so many grains of sand slipping through his fingers. It felt hopeless. The sweaty, wobbly-voiced, middle-aged wreck sitting in that chair still had an effortless vice-grip on Will’s heartstrings. And Will felt a pang of irresistible pity, considering Hannibal’s impending hangover. He was worried at the thought of Hannibal driving drunk, or falling asleep on his back and endangering himself, and hadn’t he come here to begin tearing this man’s life to pieces? Wasn’t he going to restore his own peace of mind by destroying Hannibal’s?

“I *am* angry,” Will said, far too softly. He dropped his arms and heaved a sigh. “I’m hurt. You let me down. That’s a weak way to say it, I know that, but…”

“I did not think I had a choice, it...started as a game. Told myself I was above needing anyone, but you were so…” Hannibal met his eyes with a shiver. “I was afraid of how I felt, so I made myself keep my plan in motion, follow through with it, put you away to save myself...trying to prove I didn’t need you. Will?”

Hannibal blinked at him slowly, and there were tears dotting his eyelashes. His throat bobbed, hands shaking on his knees.

“What?” Will said, not an accusation or demand like he meant it to be. A plea.

“I do need you. Think of you constantly. Want…” Hannibal shook his head and ripped his gaze away like a bandage pulled from a gushing wound. “Want you.”

“Hannibal,” Will faltered, trying to think of a goddamned thing he could say to that, other than to reciprocate. How could he fit a lie to this moment? It felt like trying to get blood from a stone, even to summon the words, tell Hannibal it was unrequited or to stop wanting him. How do you say no to your most forbidden dream, the one you’ve told yourself never to give into, the one you can’t possibly resist?

“You wouldn’t say any of this if you were sober,” he managed. “This isn’t fair. Do you have any idea how much you hurt me?” His own throat throbbed, eyes sore with tears he fought to hold back at all costs. His pride was fading, and that was the last vestige of his strength. “I really thought we were...I *felt*--” he put a hand on his broken heart. “I thought I finally found someone.”

“I’m sorry. Please, you should go. We can act as though this never happened, and you can go back to hating me.” Hannibal stared daggers at the floor as tears slipped down his cheeks.

“It was never about hating you, you fool.” Will put a hand on his shoulder. “It was only about *wanting* to hate you.”

They stayed like that for a few beats, Hannibal looking afraid to move lest Will remove his warm, reassuring hand.

Then Hannibal’s head lolled up and he looked confused and very worried, disoriented. “Room is spinning,” he lamented, “I’m going to -- please, Will, please leave, I can’t --”

“You’re gonna throw up,” Will said calmly.

He got the trashcan just in time and Hannibal grabbed it, bringing up the whole contents of his stomach in a series of lurching, terrible retches.

Will knew he must be in awful pain, but Hannibal waved a hand at him, saying in a panic, “Get *out*, don’t see me like this.”

“Shut up,” Will answered, wondering how the hell this was the first time he'd said those words to Hannibal. He put a hand on Hannibal’s back and massaged gently while the doctor let out a few last shuddering dry heaves.

Then he handed him the tissues again and announced, holding the trash can, “I’ll get rid of this.”

He went to the bathroom and cleaned up, then returned to find Hannibal looking pale, clammy and horrified. Vomiting had probably woken him up a little from his drunken stupor. The reality of the moment was setting in, the things he’d said to Will, and worst of all, that Will had seen him weak, even broken down to physical sickness in front of him. Will didn’t know if Hannibal’s pride could take it, and the look on his enemy’s face only confirmed his own newly developing plan.

“I’m going to help you, and you’re not going to try to stop me,” he commanded, letting his voice wrap the words in reluctant affection.

“As you wish,” Hannibal replied, looking entirely out of his depth.

Will brought him into the bathroom and guided him through the process of splashing warm water on his face, raking it through his hair, washing up with soap, drying off. He took off Hannibal’s tie and straightened out his shirt, tucking it back in, while Hannibal let him do all this, keeping his body slack with obedience, watching Will with big, glistening puppy dog eyes.

“There, now you don’t even smell half-bad,” Will said, and it was intended to be a little funny and hopefully comforting, but Hannibal pouted and averted his eyes, blushing and ashamed. “Aww, come on. Everyone gets drunk and makes an idiot of themselves every now and then. It’s kind of nice, to see that you’re human.”

“It’s rather humiliating on my end, but I’m glad you’re able to find a silver lining.” Hannibal spoke with his old, icy pride, and Will lightly punched his arm with a smile.

“See, that’s the spirit. Now, about your breath, though...you keep a toothbrush here?” Will asked patiently.

Hannibal flushed redder, nodded and took the necessary supplies out of the small closet by the sink. His hands were still trembling, but he brushed his teeth and put everything neatly away again. “I appreciate the help, Will.”

Will nodded, thoughtful. Deciding. “I’m not done yet. Where’s your coat?”

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“What is this place?” Hannibal asked, wincing at the bright lights that greeted them as they pushed through the heavy, retro-50’s style doors.

“It’s a diner, your majesty.” Will nodded to the tired-looking waitress who was making the rounds refilling coffee cups.

“You can seat yourself, honey,” she called familiarly, pleased to see him, like an old friend, but not surprised. Hannibal realized she knew Will well.

“Thanks, Shelley,” Will called back. He turned to Hannibal, appraising the killer’s deer-in-headlights expression.

“It’s my favorite diner. Any objections?” Will raised his eyebrows and cast Hannibal a teasing half-smile.

“No,” Hannibal conceded, wishing his heart would calm down so that his brain could begin to process the night’s events.

It had seemed like such an innocent lark, uncorking the whiskey, pouring two glasses in tribute to his former 7:30 appointment with the man who had so recently pointed a gun at his head. The man who looked at him with such utter revulsion in his kitchen and made Hannibal fear he really had destroyed any hope for their future together. It made Hannibal begin to feel he had been selfish, in a bad way this time, not merely to enjoy his sinful life and all its glories, but in thinking he could treat Will however he pleased and Will would just keep coming back for more. He started to worry, what if he had overestimated the bond between them; what if it was one-sided after all? What if Will never forgave him, even if the right moment came for Hannibal to reveal his true motives in framing him?

It had seemed harmless enough to drink both glasses of whiskey at 7:15, to prepare himself for the lonely, empty, forever open session ahead. Why not have another? The spicy-sweet alcohol slid so easily down, heavy and fogging, taking the edge off his raging misery. Then Will actually appeared before his eyes, and Hannibal couldn’t control himself or his words in response; he was elated, he was delighted, he was torn apart by impossible dreams and hopes, and now Will knew it all. How completely mortifying.

He followed Will to a table and they slid into the booth, facing each other.

"You're not still queasy are you?" Will asked. "If you are, better stick with some coffee."

It had taken an hour to drive here, in which time Hannibal's upset stomach had resolved, leaving a roaring hunger in its wake, but he hardly cared about that now.

"No, my stomach is quite recovered," Hannibal said distractedly.

Will looked perfectly calm as he handed Hannibal a laminated menu. “Have whatever you want, but I recommend something nice and greasy. It’ll help you sober up, maybe your hangover won’t be as bad tomorrow.”

“Will…” Hannibal looked at him, feeling quietly, terribly desperate.

What was happening? Why was Will treating him with such kindness? Was this a ploy, like arriving at his office dressed to the nines, smiling like a manipulative devil (it takes one to know one), intending to twist Hannibal’s affection to his advantage? Was this another stage in their game, or had the battle finally ended?

“It’s my treat,” Will said, smirking across the table at him, then returning his eyes to his own menu. “Man, I could really go for a cheeseburger. Maybe even...would you split an order of cheese fries with me? They’re so great here.”

“*Will,*” Hannibal repeated insistently.

“I guess you want me to order for you,” said Will, breezy and unperturbed.

Shelley paused by their table and clicked her pen, turning to a new page in her order notebook. “What can I get you boys? Got a fresh pot of joe on, I’ll be over with that in a jiffy of course.”

“Thanks, Shelley,” Will answered, still pondering the menu as Hannibal gaped at him. "I think we’ll have two rye patty melts, extra pickles on the side, red pepper relish too, please...and a large order of cheese fries. Two ice-waters. That’ll be all for now.”

“Comin’ right up,” she nodded, dashing off again to another table where a group of high school kids in sports jerseys had settled in.

She came back with their steaming cups of coffee in a few minutes, and by this time Will was still smiling at Hannibal’s bewildered expression.

“Don’t burn your tongue,” Will advised, sliding Hannibal’s mug closer to him. “You should drink your water first, but not too fast.”

“I can’t understand why you are doing this,” Hannibal said, finally, because there didn’t seem to be anything else to say.

“How’s your head?” Will asked, fixing his own coffee with cream and sugar, stirring it as if this was a perfectly ordinary occasion and they ate out together all the time.

“It hurts quite profoundly,” Hannibal admitted.

“Lucky you’re with me.” Will reached into his jacket pocket and took out a bottle of aspirin. “I never go anywhere without these. Here.”

He placed two pills in Hannibal’s hand and closed his fingers over them, letting his touch linger as much as his smile did.

Hannibal took the aspirin. He fixed his coffee the way he liked it, taking the time to let his shock finish seeping in. “Anyone would be lucky to be with you, Will.”

“I don’t want just anyone.” Will’s smile faded and he looked anxious for the first time since they walked into the diner. He seemed relieved when Shelley came back with their food. “Oh, thank you so much, Shell.”

“No problem, Will. Just be sure and give me a holler if you boys need anything else.”

Hannibal took in the scene of this place more intently, considering why Will would like it here. Despite the overly aggressive lighting (and he could admit that the discomfort it caused him might have more to do with his currently haggard, liquor-destroyed state than anything else), tastelessly kitschy decor, and the annoyingly chipper “oldies” playing on the jukebox, there was something soothing about it. The staff were friendly and capable, and the food, once he observed it with his usual astute criticism, looked excellent for what it was, old-fashioned American comfort fare. The people eating at the other tables around them all looked cheerful. They were enjoying themselves in some world where Hannibal had never lived, a place he never let himself venture. A place without walls around one’s heart and wicked agendas to keep oneself from caring about anyone. It was easy to picture Will regularly coming here for a coffee and a slice of pie, sitting alone at the counter, trying to detach from work and worries.

Will applied ketchup to the plate of cheese fries in a swirl around the periphery. “C’mon, dig in, this is so good.”

Hannibal began eating, delicately, with reservation, but taking in enough to accomplish the goal of balancing out the effect of the alcohol. The water helped, and the coffee. The food was delicious and Will looked so beautiful and kind.

“If you could ask the universe for one favor, here and now, what would it be?” Will asked almost nonchalantly when he had eaten half of his burger. He sipped his water and looked at Hannibal, blue eyes glowing with curiosity.

Hannibal didn’t need any time to consider his answer. “I’d go back to the day I met you and do it all over again, the right way. I would tell you that it would be wrong for me to treat you as a patient, because I have feelings for you. When I realized you were ill, I would take you to the hospital and tell them the correct diagnosis. I’d stay with you while you recovered and hold your hand, if you wanted me to.”

Will nodded, his eyes growing brighter as tears sprang into them. He ran a finger around the rim of his plate and said, “What else?”

“I would ask you if you would like to go out with me sometime, on a date. I’d buy you roses and chocolates, take you to lovely places, kiss you when you felt ready. Make love to you when you felt ready.” Hannibal’s heart was so painfully full, it edged out the insistent cries of his mind that he stop telling the truth, stop opening himself up to Will. Go back to lying; lies were safe. Love was suicide. Somehow, he couldn’t bring himself to care about the risk anymore.

Will looked nervous; his cheeks turned a beguiling shade of pink. Even after all of Hannibal’s mistakes and offenses, he wasn’t immune to such confessions. Hannibal wondered how this could be possible, but it emboldened him to keep going.

“I’d love to spoil you, if you would let me. I’d take you on vacations, buy you a puppy, ask you to move in with me.” Hannibal’s hand inched across the table, approaching Will’s, too afraid yet to touch. “When Abigail needed help, I’d include you in any decisions we made about how to go about assisting her. If she wanted to fake her death, for example, we would discuss it as a family. You would know she’s still alive, safe and well. One day, I’d ask you to run away from this place with me. I’d tell you I know you’re not happy here, lying to yourself that you can be satisfied living through other killers’ eyes. Trying to be Jack’s good soldier. Killing yourself trying to be the good man you’ll never be. I’d say, Will, you are absolutely perfect exactly as you are. You’re my dangerous, magnificent angel, and I will love you and cherish you forever. You might realize it’s a proposal, and then I suppose you would have to make a decision. But if you were still with me by then, I’d be hopeful of a yes.”

Throughout the speech, Will’s jaw had gradually dropped, shock taking over his face as the revelations spilled out, unheeded by Hannibal’s previously ironclad pride. “Abigail is --”

“Yes, she’s perfectly fine, Will. I’ll take you to her whenever you like. You may do what you think is best about it, although I still think it will be better for her to start life over than to continue as Abigail Hobbs in a world which has already condemned her. I regret lying to you about it and making you grieve her, making you think you…” Hannibal squeezed his eyes shut, his fingers so close to Will’s. “Will, I’m deeply sorry.”

Will nodded. He took Hannibal’s hand and carefully placed it back on his own side of the table, beside his burger plate. Then he ate the rest of his meal in silence, leaving Hannibal raw with harrowing fears over what he was thinking. He had just revealed himself so entirely, he might as well have stripped naked right in the middle of the diner. He had done what he had vowed never ever to do, let himself be vulnerable, offered himself in body, heart and soul to another person who had the full power to crush him in consequence.

His heart thudded with increasing dread. Shelley wandered back over and asked how the food was.

“Fantastic, as usual. Listen, can we get two slices of cherry pie?” Will asked, and as he spoke it seemed he shook himself out of a deep contemplation. “Some more coffee, too, please.”

When they were alone again, Hannibal composed himself as best he could. His hand seemed to ache since Will had moved it away. His heart was bleeding all over the table, and he was

crying oceans on the inside, but Will had not rejected him; he had not ended their meal as quickly as possible to rid himself of Hannibal's presence. They were still here.

He ate the pie, which was scrumptious, mainly to please Will. Then they rose to go, and to his heart-swelling amazement, Will held out his coat for him. "Here you go." He looked at Hannibal expectantly, and Hannibal allowed the younger man to help him into the coat.

Will drove them to his own house in Wolf Trap, and when Hannibal had accompanied him inside with yet more complete astonishment, Will announced, "You can sleep on the couch. I'm still worried about how much you drank, and I don't want you too far away. Sleep on your side, okay? I'll get you some more water, and I'll throw your clothes in the wash so you can wear them tomorrow."

Hannibal undressed for bed numbly, changing into the pajamas Will had let him borrow, looking at himself with disbelief in the bathroom mirror. The dogs milled around him as he crossed from the bathroom to the couch, and Will yawned, "Leave him alone, guys."

To Hannibal, he added, "I'm going to let them out one more time before I go to bed. You should rest now. Goodnight."

Hannibal nodded, got onto the couch and covered himself with the worn, soft blanket. He nestled his head into the pillow Will had left there and said "Goodnight."

He closed his eyes and listened to the door click shut. He listened to the muffled sound of the dogs barking and Will talking to them, his voice tired but loving.

His head was still pounding, only slightly better after the aspirin and food. But the nausea was gone and the world had stopped spinning. He hardly ever drank enough even to get tipsy, yet he knew from his medical experience that the most likely result of his shenanigans tonight would be a light continued headache in the morning and a dry mouth. If Will had not helped him, the aftermath might have been so much worse.

Although he couldn't sleep with the tumult still raging through him, the suspense over what this all meant and what Will would do tomorrow, he resided in gratitude. He lay peacefully prone and enjoyed the sounds of Will coming back into the house, getting the dogs settled for sleep. In his mind's eye, he pictured Will undressing and slipping into his pajamas, adorably drowsy. He saw Will setting his glasses on the bedside table and getting under the covers, curling up on his side, carrying Hannibal's heart in his lovely hands. Whether those hands would remain untouchable, whether Will would continue showing any kindness when the cold light of day arrived...that was quite enough to ensure Hannibal passed the night in fraught overthinking.

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The next morning, Will rose early to find Hannibal in his kitchen, making breakfast. The killer's hair was soft as his deep, honey-brown eyes, and he still wore Will's pajamas, which were a bit too small on his larger frame. There were gaps between the buttons, and the pants clung to him. Not yet realizing that Will was awake, Hannibal was obsessively laboring to

create perfect omelets and fresh-squeezed orange juice, using the juicer which someone had given Will for Christmas last year, and Will never got around to using.

Hannibal frowned at his typically expert cookery, as if it couldn't quite be good enough for Will.

He looked wonderful and adorable, even touchable, in Will's space. Will almost wished he could stay there watching him just like this all day.

Instead, he cleared his throat. "Morning."

Hannibal looked to the bed, swallowing anxiously. He shut off the stove and filled two plates with eggs and toast. "Good Morning, Will."

"I'd like you to take me to see Abigail today," Will said. He slid his glasses on, then met Hannibal at the small table where he usually ate his meals alone in a distraction of self-loathing. He felt so warm and loose all over today, like he'd grown into himself overnight.

When they sat down together, he wanted to brush his foot against Hannibal's under the table. He didn't, but he wanted to.

"Of course," said Hannibal.

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Will's reunion with Abigail was joyful, and Hannibal remained politely on the fringes of it. He walked the grounds of the cliffhouse, surveying the roiling sea while Will and Abigail conversed inside.

When they got back in the car, Will said nothing, leaving Hannibal to stew in yet more tormented suspense. He drove to Hannibal's house and only then did he speak again.

"I thought you should probably sleep here tonight. In some pajamas that are much more comfortable than mine," he laughed quietly.

Hannibal would much rather have gone back to Will's house for another night of restlessness on the couch in ill-fitting clothing, just so that they could stay close. But he nodded, keeping his expression bright and thankful.

"Of course," he said again, moving to open his door.

"Hannibal." Will put a hand on his arm and looked at him with an open-hearted smile. "I'd like for you to take me out on a date tomorrow night."

Hannibal's heart lifted into the skies above. His veins were singing with happiness; his body seemed too small all of a sudden to contain how he felt. He grinned, as helplessly as he had when he was drunk and opened his office door to find Will standing there. But this time, he didn't need any extra influence of mind-altering substances to lower his inhibitions. The walls around his heart were rubble, and everything belonged to Will.

“Of course,” Hannibal said, and when he went inside, rather than feeling choked by loneliness, he felt he was walking on air.

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They went on several dates the next week, to dinner, a movie, walks through the park and across a starlit beach. On the second date, Will took Hannibal’s hand during a powerful scene in the movie. On the third date, under the glowing full moon with the cold ocean lapping the dark, wet sand they walked through, Will murmured, “I’m ready for you to kiss me.”

The kiss was soft and full, long and sweet. Will opened to him on heady sighs and they wrapped their arms around each other, tongues meeting as Hannibal’s body ached with love and arousal.

“Wow,” Will marveled, drawing back after they had kissed for quite a while. He pressed his hands to Hannibal’s chest over his pounding heartbeat and smiled, “You’re a great kisser.”

“I love you, Will,” said Hannibal in a heated rush of breath, without meaning to.

Will kept smiling, brushed a kiss to his burning cheek. “Let’s have dinner at your place tomorrow. Promise you won’t drive yourself too crazy planning the so-called perfect meal for me; just relax.” He squeezed Hannibal’s arm. “You can just order pizza if you want.”

Hannibal smirked, his teary-eyed haze reverting to gentle humor. “I’m not going to order pizza, Will.”

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Will savored every bite of the lavish dinner Hannibal had prepared, making sure he complimented the chef on each course. He knew how hard Hannibal worked to make him happy, but he wanted it to stop being work. Instead, he wanted Hannibal to relax and cease worrying that this couldn’t be real, or that Will was going to stop wanting this at any moment.

Over dessert, he said cautiously, “I’m going to talk to Jack tomorrow. Let him know I won’t be assisting with any more cases.”

He spoke slowly and evenly because he knew Hannibal was already on edge, always wondering what was going to happen next, never sure it would keep going well, as it had been since the night of the diner.

“Oh?” Hannibal set his fork down and ignored his decadent cake.

“Yeah, I think you were right. Consulting with the FBI is making me miserable. Teaching at the Academy doesn’t make me happy either.”

“I’m glad you are taking steps to improve your quality of life, Will.” Hannibal smiled, encouraging, missing the deeper meaning with his surprisingly humble expectations. “I’m proud of you.”

“Thank you. Are you going to ask me what *does* make me happy?”

“Would it surprise you to know that I deeply want to ask you, but I’m slightly afraid to?” Hannibal kept eye contact, but Will could see it was hard for him, confronting his feelings and insecurities so directly.

“No, it doesn’t.” Will took Hannibal’s hand and caressed it. “Being with you makes me happy. And being with Abigail. Having the dogs around makes me happy. I think someday, if you could tolerate us only going after horrible people, killing with you would make me happy, too. I think it’s what I need.”

“Will, I...don’t know how. What to say…” Hannibal squeezed his hand, then rose from his seat to kneel beside Will’s.

Will clasped his face, stroking over the fine cheekbones and lush lips. “I think you’re what I need, Hannibal, and you always have been. I want us to run away together, take the dogs. You, me and Abigail. Start over somewhere very far away, be happy. Is that what you want, too?”

“More than anything, but Will, after everything I did…” Hannibal leaned into Will’s touch, still looking almost frightened.

“You told me the truth.” Will petted through his hair and Hannibal relaxed slightly. “You said you were sorry. You were wrong and you did awful things, and I was mad. But I’m not mad anymore because I forgive you. Come here.”

He stood and brought Hannibal into the study, where there was a fire going, soft crackling flames creating a romantic ambiance. He kissed Hannibal’s lips and rubbed his back.

“I love you, Hannibal Lecter.” Will’s voice was gentle and coaxing, an invitation to believe.

Hannibal’s fears seemed to melt that easily. He kissed Will back, getting passionate and wonderfully greedy. “My darling,” he sighed, lowering Will onto the fluffy rug in front of the fireplace.

Firelight painted them in orange and red licks as Hannibal undressed them, then kissed Will’s body, nearly every single inch of him, from head to toe. Will moaned, eyes closed, fingers growing sweaty and clingy on Hannibal’s arms, then through his hair when Hannibal kissed him lower.

“Please,” Will whispered as Hannibal licked his rigid cock and then engulfed it in the tight heat of his mouth, “Please…”

“Anything,” Hannibal declared, pumping Will slickly, looking up at him with complete devotion to his pleasure. “Anything, Will. Just tell me and it’s yours.”

“You,” Will smiled almost lazily, caressing his face. His hips shuddered up of their own volition, making his cock rub against Hannibal’s cheek. They both cried out softly, and Will added, “I want to feel you inside me.”

Hannibal left him only to get the lube from his bedroom. He used plenty of it, along with his shamelessly indulgent mouth, to get Will dripping wet, relaxed and ready. Will's heart hammered at the speed of light as he opened his shaking legs to wrap around Hannibal, bringing the older man's strong body to him as close as they could get.

"I'm all yours, love," Hannibal sighed against Will's lips as he filled him with a careful, loving glide that made Will tremble harder.

He held onto Hannibal and cried, thinking no one should love anyone this much, that he would rather die than not have this every day, always. "Please," he whispered again, weak and falling apart on whimpers. Hannibal was thick inside his tight walls, so powerful and perfect and his. "Please, I need you. You feel unbelievable."

"My love," Hannibal said, voice broken. He drove into Will harder, taking both of their breaths away.

"Oh!" Will cried out. Hannibal had pressed right to his prostate, and the pleasure was mind-blowing. "That, do that again, oh, *God*--"

Hannibal grinned, delighted at Will's responsiveness. He pinned Will down to the rug and fucked him relentlessly, hard and deep the way Will was growing to love and need it so, so much, so badly, it was going to hurt every moment of his life they weren't doing this, when he had to wait. He knew Hannibal would never make him wait too long.

"My beautiful boy." Hannibal said when he had Will on hands and knees before him. He kissed Will's neck and his back, euphorically worshipping, and then he was inside again, thrusting slick and fast, hitting the exactly right spot that made Will keen with dizzying rapture. It became too much when Hannibal began stroking Will's cock while fucking him; Will gave a ragged cry as he came, so hard and copious, spurting all over Hannibal's hand. With a coarse answering moan, Hannibal rutted into him fiercely until his hips shuddered out of rhythm and a gush of warmth coated Will inside.

Will didn't mind the sticky, musky mess of it, just craved more, more than their bodies could give them right away. So he settled for snuggling into the delicious heat of Hannibal, nuzzled against his hairy chest, the older man's arms locked around him.

"Thank you," he sighed, kissing Hannibal's chest, then his neck, his lips, fingers tangled in the silky, sweaty hair atop his lover's head. In the firelight, he could see the pretty silvery shades threaded through the light brown, and he thought, *how completely gorgeous.* His body felt blissfully relaxed and crazy-excited all at once, and Hannibal was staring at him in wonderment, kissing his forehead, stroking through his curls.

"Why on earth are you thanking me, Will?" Hannibal chuckled. "It seems to me that I'm the one who owes you a world of gratitude."

"Maybe so," Will admitted, smiling playfully. "I do have a few reasons for thanking you, Hannibal. I mean, you've shown me how to accept myself even though I'm capable of doing very dark things. You've given me love and happiness, and a future to look forward to, all

things I never had before. But at the moment, there's something more specific I want to thank you for."

"Really?" Hannibal asked with a mischief to match his own, "Whatever could it be?"

Will flipped them over and climbed astride Hannibal like his favorite new jungle gym, then leaned down to kiss his mouth. "*Thank you*," he grinned, "For stealing my whiskey."

End Notes

I've written drunk!Will a bunch of times and thought drunk!Hannibal would be fun for a change 😄 Thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed! 💕

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